DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 229 EC 304 660

TITLE	Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs.
INSTITUTION	Alberta Dept. of Education, Edmonton. Special Educational Services Branch.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-7732-1763-0
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	33p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Special Education Branch, 10th Floor, East Devonian Bldg., 11160 Jasper Ave., Edmonton, Alberta 5TK 0L2, Canada.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Compliance (Legal); Definitions; Delivery Systems; *Disabilities; *Educational Legislation; *Educational Policy; Educational Practices; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Gifted; Program Development; *Special Needs Students; *State Standards
IDENTIFIERS	*Alberta

ABSTRACT

This guide sets out the requirements and expectations for the development and delivery of programs for students with special needs in Alberta, Canada. First, it describes legislation (especially the School Act of 1988) and policy related to educating students with special needs. Next it specifies established requirements and expectations in the following areas: screening for early identification, referral, assessment, program planning and implementation, program placement, outcomes, appeals, children's services, health-related support services, transition planning, and school board policy. A glossary defines key terms and an appendix defines the categories of special needs which are accepted and used for administrative and funding purposes in the province. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 392 229

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

GUIDE TO EDUCATION

Students with Special Needs

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Guide to Ed

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Alberta EDUCATION

Sp.Ed
Alberta Education
Special Education Branch

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GUIDE TO EDUCATION

FOR

STUDENTS

WITH

SPECIAL NEEDS

Alberta Education
Special Education Branch
1995

ALBERTA EDUCATION CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Alberta. Alberta Education. Special Education Branch.
Guide to education for students with special needs.

ISBN 0-7732-1763-0
Replaces Special education manual, Special education handbook, Program adequacy in special education.

1. Special education -- Alberta -- Handbooks, manuals, etc. 2. Special education -- Law and legislation -- Alberta. I. Title.

LC3984.2A3.A333 1995 371.9

For additional copies or further information, contact:

Special Education Branch
10th Floor, East Devonian Building
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 0L2

Telephone: (403) 422–6326 FAX: (403) 422–2039

This document is intended for:

Students	
Teachers	√
Administrators	√
Parents	√
General Public	
Other	

Copyright © 1995, the Crown in Right of Alberta, as represented by the Minister of Education. Alberta Education, 10th Floor, East Devonian Building, 11160 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 0L2.

Permission is given by the copyright owner to reproduce this document for educational purposes and on a non-profit basis.

Acknowledgments

Project Team

Jim McClellan
Rick Morrow
Elaine Kryzanowski

Appreciation also is expressed to the Special Education Branch Advisory Committee and the many individuals in school systems who reviewed drafts and provided valuable feedback.

Editors

Patricia Cox
Marilyn Tungland

Desktop Publishing

Brenda Patterson

Cover Design

Shane Chen

The *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs* was prepared by the Special Education Branch under the direction of:

Harvey Finnestad, Director
Rick Morrow, Deputy Director
Jim McClellan, Coordinator, Special Education Administration

Contents

Page

Introduction 1

Purpose 2

Legislation and Policy 3

Legislation 3

Policy 5

Program Delivery Requirements and Expectations 7

Screening for Early Identification 9

Referral 10

Assessment 11

Program Planning and Implementation 12

Program Placement 13

Outcomes 14

Appeals 15

Children's Services 16

Health-Related Support Services 17

Transition Planning 18

School Board Policy 19

Glossary 21

Appendix Categories of Special Needs 23

Introduction

Alberta Education's mandate is to ensure that Alberta students have the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to be self-reliant, responsible, caring and contributing members of society. To fulfill this mandate, the department develops and administers legislation, regulations and policies related to the governance, funding and delivery of education in the province.

Students with special needs, including those who are gifted and talented, require specialized learning opportunities in order to receive the best possible education.

School boards are responsible for meeting the special education needs of their resident students. The Basic Instruction funding provided for all students includes funds for special education. Additional funding is allocated to school boards for each student that meets the criteria of the Severe Disabilities funding and is provided an education program.

The *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs* sets out the requirements and expectations for the development and delivery of programs for students with special needs.

Purpose

This document

- describes
  - government legislation and policy related to educating students with special needs
  - Alberta Education's requirements and expectations for educating students with special needs
- supports Alberta Education's objective of providing consistent direction, while supporting flexibility and discretion at the local level
- complements the information contained in the *Guide to Education* series, which consists of the *ECS to Grade 9 Handbook* and the *Senior High School Handbook*
- replaces the following Alberta Education documents
  - *Special Education Manual* (February 1987)
  - *Special Education Handbook* (1982)
  - *Program Adequacy in Special Education* (1987)
- reflects current practice in the majority of Alberta school jurisdictions

Although intended primarily to provide direction to central office and school administrators, this document also will be of use to teachers, parents and others interested in educating students with special needs. It does not prescribe instructional methods or program adaptations. For detailed information on these topics, readers are referred to a new special education series to be released in Fall 1995, entitled *Programming for Students with Special Needs*.

The *Guide to Education for Students with Special Needs* will be revised annually, with the first review occurring prior to the 1996–97 school year. The process of revision will be ongoing, based on continuing dialogue among partners in education. Comments and suggestions are welcomed from educators, parents, and where appropriate, students and other community members.

Legislation and Policy

Legislation

The *School Act* (1988) mandates that

> Every child of school age is entitled to an education program. (See *School Act*, section 3.)

A student requiring a special education program is entitled to a program appropriate for the student's needs, age and level of educational achievement.

> School boards are responsible for educating resident students, including those with special needs. (See *School Act*, section 28.)

- School boards must provide programs for all of their resident students and resident students of the Government living in the jurisdiction.
- School boards are responsible for directing students to attend a particular school operated by the board.
- School boards may provide a program for a resident student by directing the student to attend a school of another board or authority. Where this is the case, the student's board will enter into an agreement (s. 46(1)(b)) to provide any additional funding required to cover the net cost of the student's school program[1].
- Where a school board directs the placement of a student to a designated special education private school, the board may claim any applicable funding and must pay the full cost of the program to the private school.

[1] For additional information, refer to Alberta Education's *School Grants Manual*.

- Where a school board has an appropriate program, but has mutually agreed with parents that their children attend designated special education private schools, the board will contribute to private school program costs an amount equal to that provided by the province. Boards can claim applicable funding for these students from Alberta Education. The special education private schools will not claim any funding for these students.

- A parent of a student can enroll a student in a school of any board if the board agrees there are sufficient resources and facilities available to accommodate the student.

- A parent cannot request a student's placement in another school during a school year unless the board operating the other school consents.

  Where a school board offers a resident student an appropriate program, and the parent places the student in a program operated by another authority, the board has met its obligation to the student.

- If parents feel that an appropriate program is not being provided for their child, they may initiate an appeal (See *School Act,* sections 103, 104).

School boards are responsible for determining that a student is in need of a special education program. (See *School Act,* section 29.)

- School boards will utilize qualified persons to identify students for whom a special education program is necessary.

- School boards will provide access to a special education program for students identified as in need of a special education program.

- School boards will consult with parents, and where appropriate, the student, before providing a special education program.

- A special education program:

  - is based on an Individualized Program Plan (IPP) which specifies goals and objectives and outlines services to meet the identified educational needs of individual students with special needs[2]

  - may be provided in a variety of settings, including the regular classroom

[2] For further information, refer to Book 3, *Individualized Program Plans*, of *Programming for Students With Special Needs* (to be released Fall 1995).

- is based on and modified by the results of continuous assessment and evaluation
- provides for instruction appropriate to the student's individual learning level

> "A board may determine that a student is, by virtue of the student's behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics, or a combination of those characteristics, a student in need of a special education program." (See *School Act*, section 29(1).)

Students with special needs are those who require changes to any or all of the following:

- regular curriculum
- staffing
- instructional and evaluation strategies
- materials or resources
- facilities or equipment

In addition, some students may require specialized health care services.

There are categories of special needs that are generally accepted and used for administrative and funding purposes. Descriptions are included in the Appendix (see p. 23).

A special education program is described in the IPP and may be delivered in a variety of settings. All students with special needs, including the gifted and talented, require IPPs.

Policy

The *Alberta Education Policy, Regulations and Forms Manual* contains provincial policies that describe expectations regarding the education of all students. The following are most relevant to educating students with special needs:

- *Special Education* (Policy 1 · 10 · 2)
- *Educational Placement of Students with Exceptional Needs* (Policy 1 · 10 · 1)
- *Resident Students of the Government* (Policy 1 · 10 · 4)
- *Students in Institutions* (Policy 1 · 10 · 5)
- *Review by the Minister* (Policy 1 · 8 · 1)
- *Special Needs Tribunal* (Policy 1 · 8 · 2)

Program Delivery Requirements and Expectations

Alberta Education is responsible for establishing a basis for the provision of equitable access to appropriate and effective education programs for all Alberta students, including those with special needs. The department has established requirements and expectations in the following areas:

- screening for early identification
- referral
- assessment
- program planning and implementation
- program placement
- outcomes
- appeals
- children's services
- health-related support services
- transition planning
- school board policy

Screening for Early Identification

Requirement
Students are screened for early identification of special needs.[3]

School authorities will:

- provide information to school staff and parents that describes characteristics that may be used to help identify special needs in the following areas:
  - physical
  - behavioral
  - communicational
  - cognitive
  - social/emotional
  - academic
  - hearing and vision
- obtain from parents, information relevant to their child's education; e.g., hearing, speech, vision, developmental progress, medical information. This information will be obtained when the child enters the educational program, e.g., kindergarten, Grade 1, and will be kept updated.

[3] For additional information, refer to Alberta Education publications *Teacher Alert System (TAS): A Guide for Teacher-Managed Assessment of Students Who are "At Risk" of School Failure* (1991) and *Teacher Intervention Practices (TIPS): A Companion Document to the Teacher Alert System* (1992).

Referral

Requirement

Students "at risk" for learning problems and those identified as having special needs are referred for further consultation and/or assessment.

School authorities will:

- have written procedures to identify students requiring referral to specialists for assessment
- provide parents, teachers and support staff with necessary information regarding the sequence of steps to be taken when a referral is made
- involve parents, and where appropriate, students, in decisions related to the referral
- obtain parents' informed, written consent for referral
- make referrals on the basis of a variety of indicators, including the results of:
  - screening procedures
  - teacher assessment and observation
  - parent information, including their external assessments
- require that formal psycho-educational consultation and/or assessment occur within four weeks of the date of referral
- require that a student support team, involving teachers, parents and appropriate others, meet to identify interim instructional strategies, if necessary.

Assessment

Requirement
Assessments are conducted to determine suitable educational goals, instructional strategies and services in support of the student's program [4]

School authorities will:

- use results of assessments provided by specialists, school staff and/or parents to plan programs
- require that qualified individuals conduct assessments and interpret to parents, teachers and others involved with the student's program, the assessment results and any program planning recommendations
- require that assessment results be used to develop IPPs
- require that when psycho-educational assessments are necessary, they are conducted and results are interpreted, recorded and used according to Alberta Education's expectations outlined in *Standards for Psycho-Educational Assessment* (1994)
- require that where students require special provisions for testing, these are available for school-based and provincial assessments
- use a variety of assessment strategies to assess student performance.

[4] For additional information, refer to the Alberta Education publications *Understanding Students' Needs: A Guide for Developing and Implementing Assessment Procedures for Students Encountering Educational Challenges* (1993) and *Promising Assessment Models and Practices* (1994).

Program Planning and Implementation

Requirement

An Individualized Program Plan (IPP) is developed and implemented for each student identified as having special needs.

School authorities will:

- require that school administrators ensure IPPs are prepared, implemented and evaluated
- require that school administrators assign primary responsibility to staff for developing IPPs and instructional plans. Parents, and where appropriate, students and other professionals, will be involved in the development of IPPs
- include the following essential information in IPPs:[5]
  - assessed level of educational performance
  - assessment procedures
  - strengths and areas of need
  - long-term goals and short-term objectives
  - special education and related services to be provided
  - review dates, results and recommendations
  - relevant medical and background information
  - required classroom accommodations (any changes to expectations, instructional and evaluation strategies, materials and resources, facilities or equipment)
  - transition plans
- review IPPs formally with parents, and where appropriate, students, at least once annually
- use results of IPP reviews to assess, and where necessary, revise student programs and placement
- implement programs in accordance with goal expectations and services specified in IPPs

[5] For further information, refer to Book 3, *Individualized Program Plans*, of *Programming for Students With Special Needs* (to be released Fall 1995).

Program Placement

Requirement
Students are placed in programs where their needs can best be met.

School authorities will:

- establish a process for determining the most appropriate and enabling program placement for a student with special needs
- in consultation with parents, determine the most appropriate program placement in a manner consistent with the *Educational Placement of Students with Exceptional Needs Policy* (Policy 1 • 10 • 1).

Outcomes

Requirement
Learning outcomes are identified in the student's Individualized Program Plan (IPP)

Work in this area is currently under development. The Special Education Branch will work with parents, school systems and the community to develop a framework for outcomes for special needs programming within the context of Alberta Education's outcomes for all students.

Appeals

Requirement
Processes for equitable and fair disputes resolution and appeals are available.

School authorities will:

- make every effort to resolve concerns:
  - together in a collaborative way with parents to meet the needs of each student
  - at the local level
  - through mediation
- establish written procedures to hear appeals from parents regarding decisions that significantly affect the education of students with special needs. (Refer to the *School Act*, section 103.)
- inform and provide parents with written copies of procedures to deal with disputes at the local level
- inform parents of their right to a review by the Minister of Education if they are not satisfied with the decision of the Board.[6] (See *School Act*, section 104.)

[6] For more information, refer to Alberta Education policy no. 03-03-01, *Review by the Minister*.

Children's Services

Requirement
Coordinated services are provided to students.[7]

School authorities will:

- plan the delivery of services for individuals and groups of students with other community service providers
- develop procedures to maintain ongoing communication with parents, community agencies and other professionals so that:
  - appropriate services are provided
  - coordinated services are provided
  - program transitions are planned and provided
- plan and provide children's services consistent with the recommendations of the Commissioner of Services for Children.

[7] A policy in this area is under development

Health-Related Support Services

Requirement
Written procedures are available regarding the provision of health-related support services for students with special needs.

School boards will have written procedures for staff to respond to emergency situations related to a student's identified medical needs.

Where school board staff assist in the provision of health-related support services, school authorities will:

- obtain written authorization from parents and appropriate health professionals to provide health-related support services to students
- incorporate in a student's IPP, procedures for providing health-related support services
- ensure that staff are provided appropriate training by health professionals or other trained individuals (including parents), in administering health-related support services
- have written procedures regarding storing and/or administering medications.

Transition Planning

Requirement
Transitions are planned.[8]

School authorities will:

- initiate the transition process and coordinate the development of a plan
- develop plans collaboratively with the student, family and community agencies involved with the student
- inform parents of alternatives available to their child upon completion of the school program
- provide parents with information about community service agencies
- establish procedures to advise parents of:
  - anticipated transition from one level of schooling to another (from kindergarten — elementary — junior high — senior high)
  - anticipated termination of the provision of special education services.
- establish procedures to advise parents and appropriate community agencies one year in advance of anticipated completion of a special education program (school to post-secondary, community or work situations).

[8] For additional information, refer to Alberta Education publications *Transition Planning for Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities: A Resource Guide for Families, Teachers and Counsellors* (1992) and Book 3, *Individualized Program Plans*, of *Programming for Students with Special Needs* (to be released Fall 1995).

School Board Policy

Requirement

Written policies and procedures are developed in consultation with parents, kept current and implemented consistent with provincial policies and procedures

School authorities will

- develop and implement written policies and procedures about educating students with special needs, including students identified as gifted and talented
- ensure that the written policies and procedures
  - are consistent with provincial policies and guidelines
  - describe all program and service options available for students with special needs
  - describe the roles of school board personnel (administrators, teachers, professional support staff), parents and community agencies that support students with special needs
  - are updated regularly
  - are available to educators, parents, and where appropriate, students
- ensure that there are written procedures to
  - identify and assess students
  - consult with parents
  - determine program placement(s) for students
  - develop, implement and evaluate IPPs for students
  - evaluate the individual progress of students
  - store and access student records[9]
  - evaluate the effectiveness of services and programs
  - appeal at the local level

[9] For more information, refer to the *Student Record Regulation* (Alberta Regulation 213/89, amended A.R. 175/93)

Glossary

Assessment

The ongoing process of collecting information about the student. Information from the assessment is used to make decisions about program placement, program planning, and student and program evaluation.

Includes psycho-educational assessment, which is formal testing of a student across a variety of domains relevant to performance (intellectual, personality/emotional, behavioral) with a view to developing an appropriate program.

At Risk

Students may be considered to be "at risk" for learning problems because of certain conditions in which they live, including poverty, unhealthy living conditions, neglect and abuse. They also may be at risk of developing health problems.

Consultation

A process in which parents and school staff share information and that involves parents in decision making.

Evaluation

A judgment made on the basis of assessment information.

Informed Consent

Indicates that parents understand and have agreed to the action to be taken.

Parent

Parent or legal guardian of a child.

Referral

The process of directing a student to the appropriate school-based, school system-based or community-based specialist for consultation and/or assessment.

School Authorities

School boards and private schools, and their staff. Includes all personnel at the school district and school levels.

Appendix

Categories of Special Needs

The following categories are generally accepted and used for administrative and funding purposes.

GIFTED AND TALENTED

MILD/MODERATE DISABILITIES

Educable Mental Disability
Trainable Mental Disability
Emotional/Behavioral Disability
Learning Disability
Hearing Impairment — Hard-of-Hearing
Visual Impairment — Low Vision
Speech and Language Impairment

SEVERE DISABILITIES

Dependent Mental Disability
Emotional/Behavioral Disability
Multiple Disability
Severe Physical Disability including Neurological Disorders
Deafness
Blindness

INSTITUTIONAL/HOMEBOUND

Social Services
Justice
Hospitals
Homebound

Early Childhood Services—Grade 12 Special Education

The following definitions are to assist school systems, private schools and Early Childhood Services operators in determining eligibility for Alberta Education funding.

Gifted and Talented

Gifted and talented students are those who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of exceptional performance. These are students who require differentiated provisions and/or programs beyond the regular school program to realize their contribution to self and society.

Categories of Giftedness: A Description

Students capable of exceptional performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in one of several areas:

General Intellectual Ability
The student possessing general intellectual ability is consistently superior to the other students in the school, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Usually, this is the student who has a large storehouse of information about a wide variety of topics. The ability to abstract, generalize and utilize high level thinking skills is common in this type of student.

Specific Academic Aptitude
The student possessing a specific academic aptitude is that student who in a specific subject area, is consistently superior to the aptitudes of the other students in the school to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned education services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who has an inordinate strength in a specific area, such as mathematical reasoning.

27

Creative or Productive Thinking
The student who thinks creatively or productively is one who consistently engages in divergent thinking that results in unconventional responses to conventional tasks, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular program. Generally, this is the student who is unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination.

Leadership Ability
The student possessing leadership ability is one who not only assumes leadership roles, but also is accepted by others as a leader, to the extent that the student needs and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those provided by the regular school program. Generally, this is the student who can be counted upon to carry out responsibilities and adapts readily to new situations.

Visual and Performing Arts
The student possessing visual and performing arts ability is that student who consistently creates outstanding aesthetic productions in graphic areas, sculpture, music, drama or dance, and can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program.

Psychomotor Ability
The student possessing psychomotor ability is the one who consistently displays mechanical skills or athletic ability so superior to that of other students in the school that the student can profit from specially planned educational services beyond those normally provided by the regular program. Generally, this is the student with good control of body movement and excellent eye-hand coordination.

Mild/Moderate Disabling Conditions

Educable Mental Disability (EMD)

The student who has an educable mental disability is one who is usually significantly delayed in reading, arithmetic and other academic subjects as compared to his same-age peers. Upon leaving school, the majority should be able to hold a job, manage their affairs, and otherwise provide for themselves and their family.

Any student designated as having an educable mental disability should have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of 50 to 75 $\pm$ 5 as measured on an individual intelligence test.

Trainable Mental Disability (TMD)

The student who has a trainable mental disability is one who is very unlikely to make meaningful achievement in the traditional academic subjects, but who is capable of profiting from instruction in living/vocational skills.

Any student who is designated as having a trainable mental disability should:

a. have an intelligence quotient (IQ) in the range of approximately 30 to 50 $\pm$ 5 as measured on an individual intelligence test

b. have an adaptive behavior score equivalent to the moderately retarded level on an adaptive behavior scale (e.g., American Association on Mental Deficiency Adaptive Behavior Scale, Progress Assessment Chart, Vineland).

Emotional/ Behavioral Disability

Generally described, behavior disabilities are the result of conflict between the student and the environment and occur when students respond to their educational environment in ways which deviate significantly from age-appropriate expectations and interfere with their own learning and/or that of others. Qualitatively described, they can be "mild," "moderate," or "severe" in terms of the extent to which they disrupt the student's educational program.

There is no magic formula a teacher or resource person can use to define a behavior disability, either in terms of whether one exists or, if one does, how severe it is. The definition and identification of a behavior disability will always be partly objective (what is actually happening that can be verified by more than one person) and partly subjective (what is perceived to be happening by a single observer). This depends on the observations as well as the values, mood and tolerance level of the teacher. One teacher's definition of behavior disability may be another teacher's definition of a praiseworthy act by the student(s). For example, one teacher may not accept any arguing from students, while another may reinforce students for arguing (within reason) to support their point of view.

Typically, behavior disabilities are characterized by a number of traits:

a. the demonstration of an inability to establish or maintain satisfactory relationships with peers or adults
b. the demonstration of a general mood of unhappiness or depression
c. the demonstration of inappropriate behavior or feelings under ordinary conditions
d. the demonstration of continued difficulty in coping with the learning situation in spite of remedial intervention
e. the demonstration of physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems

f. the demonstration of difficulties in accepting the realities of personal responsibility and accountability
g. the demonstration of physical violence toward other persons and/or physical destructiveness toward the environment.

Learning Disability

The term "learning disability" refers to any one of a heterogeneous group of chronic disorders that may have as its basis either an identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. These disorders may be manifested by difficulties in one or more processes such as attention and planning. This results in demonstrable weaknesses in language arts, mathematics and/or social acceptance.

Learning disabilities may affect anyone. However, if a student is underachieving relative to his or her learning potential and has no sensory impairment, no motor impairment, adequate motivational and learning opportunities, and an adequate learning environment, then learning disabilities are considered to be the primary disabling condition.

For the majority of students with learning disabilities, modification of the instructional process and/or the learning environment is required to meet their unique learning needs. In some instances, the use of a specific curriculum, directed to a student's need and abilities, may be required.

Students with learning disabilities exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

disorganization
distractibility
hyperactivity or hypoactivity
impulsivity
inflexibility
perseveration
weak social relationships.

Learning disabilities also refers to deficit functioning in one or more learning processes; i.e., auditory and visual receptive channels, and verbal and written expressive channels.

Hearing Impairment—Hard-of-Hearing

Hearing problems which interfere with learning in any way are classified as hearing impairments. A student with a hearing impairment is one who has a hearing loss which interferes with his or her acquisition or maintenance of auditory skills necessary to develop speech and language. This includes children who have a hearing impairment at birth and those who develop hearing problems later.

Student who is Hard-of-Hearing
The student will have an average hearing loss of 25 decibels or more unaided over the normal range of speech.

Visual Impairment—Low Vision

Student with a Visual Impairment
The student who has a visual impairment is one whose visual condition is such that it interferes with the ability to learn unless educational adaptations are made.

Student with Low Vision
The student will have a visual acuity of less than 20/70 (6/21 metric) in the better eye after correction but more than 20/200 (6/60 metric).

Speech and Language Impairment

Student with a Speech Impairment
The student who has a speech impairment has speech which deviates so far from the speech of others that it calls attention to itself, interferes with communication or causes maladjustment.

A communication impairment refers to disorders in comprehension and/or use of language/articulation voice and fluency skills.

Language Disorders
Language disorders encompass problems in semantics (word meanings), syntax (grammatical patterns), morphology (word order) and certain aspects of phonology (speech sounds).

Articulation Disorders
Articulation disorders are problems with speech sound production and their integration. They are characterized by substitutions, distortions, omissions and additions.

Voice Disorders
Voice disorders include problems in vocal production and control characterized by differences and deviations in pitch, loudness, quality and prosody (including rate), which are inappropriate for the student's age and sex.

Fluency Disorders
Fluency disorders are problems in maintaining speech flow due to interferences such as repetition, prolongation, hesitation, broken words, revisions or extraneous movements.

Severe Disabling Conditions

Dependent Mental Disability

Due to severe mental disability, constant supervision and assistance are required in self-care, motor skills, communication and other aspects of daily living.

For ECS children this may mean little if any functional adaptive behavior and/or an inability to initiate meaningful play.

Emotional/ Behavioral Disability	Students with severe emotional and/or behavioral disabilities display chronic, extreme and pervasive behaviors that drastically interfere with their ability to function within existing social, cultural or age-appropriate standards. Their behaviors are so profoundly inappropriate that they significantly interfere with the educational environment and the safety and progress of self and/or others. Eligible students must be receiving highly individualized educational programming and intensive support services at school, including close adult supervision. An assessment or opinion from a chartered psychologist or psychiatrist must be obtained to indicate the nature and severity of the disability. The effects of the disability on the student's functioning ability should be described. An ongoing treatment plan should be available and efforts should be made to link students with appropriate mental health and therapeutic services. Eligible students must be exhibiting chronic, excessive and pervasive behaviors such as: a. dangerously aggressive, destructive and/or impulsive behaviors, including violence or serious threats of violence to self, others or to property; or b. autism; or c. self-stimulation, perseveration, echolalia and/or aphasic behavior; or d. severe passive or withdrawal behaviors, schizophrenia, manic depression or similar severe disorder; or e. other behavioral/emotional disorders of similar nature and consequence. For ECS children this may include little, if any, expressive or receptive communication skills.
Multiple Disability	Students who are severely disabled as a result of two or more non-associated major disabling conditions, the effects of which result in a functioning level as low or lower than that which is associated with a severe primary disability, and which results in a very high level of dependency; e.g., Visually Impaired-Mentally Disabled.
Physical Disability— Including Neurological Disorders	Normal body movements and functions are impeded or prevented by physical disability, specific neurological disorder and/or medical conditions so that attendance in an educational program requires extensive assistance.

Deafness	An average hearing loss of at least 70 decibels unaided in the better ear over the normal range of speech; i.e., severe to profound hearing loss. For ECS children, absence of speech and/or severe communication problems may preclude hearing as a learning mode.
Blindness	Visual acuity is 20/200 (6/60 metric) or less in the better eye with correction or, a field of vision limited to an angle 15 degrees or less in both eyes, or a CNIB registration number.

Institutional/Homebound

This category includes students of legal school age (ages 6–15) inclusive who require educational services in a non-school environment such as a group home, correctional institution, hospital or home.

Family & Social Services	Students may be placed in a group home or some other special setting by Alberta Family and Social Services.
Justice	Students who have committed an offense under the law are placed in a detention centre or some other legal setting.
Hospitals	Students who are receiving treatment in a hospital setting.
Homebound	Students who may be medically fragile or who are homebound for other reasons.

References

Alberta Education Documents

Behavior Disorders in Schools: A Practical Guide to Identification, Assessment and Correction (1986)

Educating Gifted and Talented Students in Alberta: A Resource Manual for Teachers (1986)

School Grants Manual